

Colorado's Teacher Shortages:

Attracting and Retaining Excellent Educators

December 5, 2017



COLORADO
Department of Education



COLORADO
Department of
Higher Education

Legislative Requirements

- HB 17-1003 was developed as a key step in addressing our ongoing educator shortages.
- HB 17-1003 was authored by Rep. McLachlan (D-Durango) and Sen. Coram (R- Montrose), approved by the Colorado legislature and signed by Governor Hickenlooper in May 2017.
- Led by the Department of Higher Education (DHE), the bill requires DHE in collaboration with the Colorado Department of Education to develop an action plan that will outline ideas to resolve our educator shortages.
- Feedback and participation from interested individuals and groups was an essential component of the legislation, the process and final action plan. The plan also needed to include no cost options.

Summary of the Problem

- Overall decline in both interest in teaching profession and retention of teachers
- **22.7% decline in the number of educators completing an educator preparation program at Colorado colleges and universities between the years 2010- 2015**
- **6% decline in total number of individuals completing an educator preparation program at Colorado colleges and universities during the 2014-15 academic year (5th consecutive year of decline)**
- Individuals completing an alternative licensing program has **increased to 816** during 2014-15. Represents a 42% increase from the previous year and represents **24.5%** of all the total completers in the state
- 6% decline in enrollment in educator preparation programs at institutions of higher education during the 2014-15 academic year



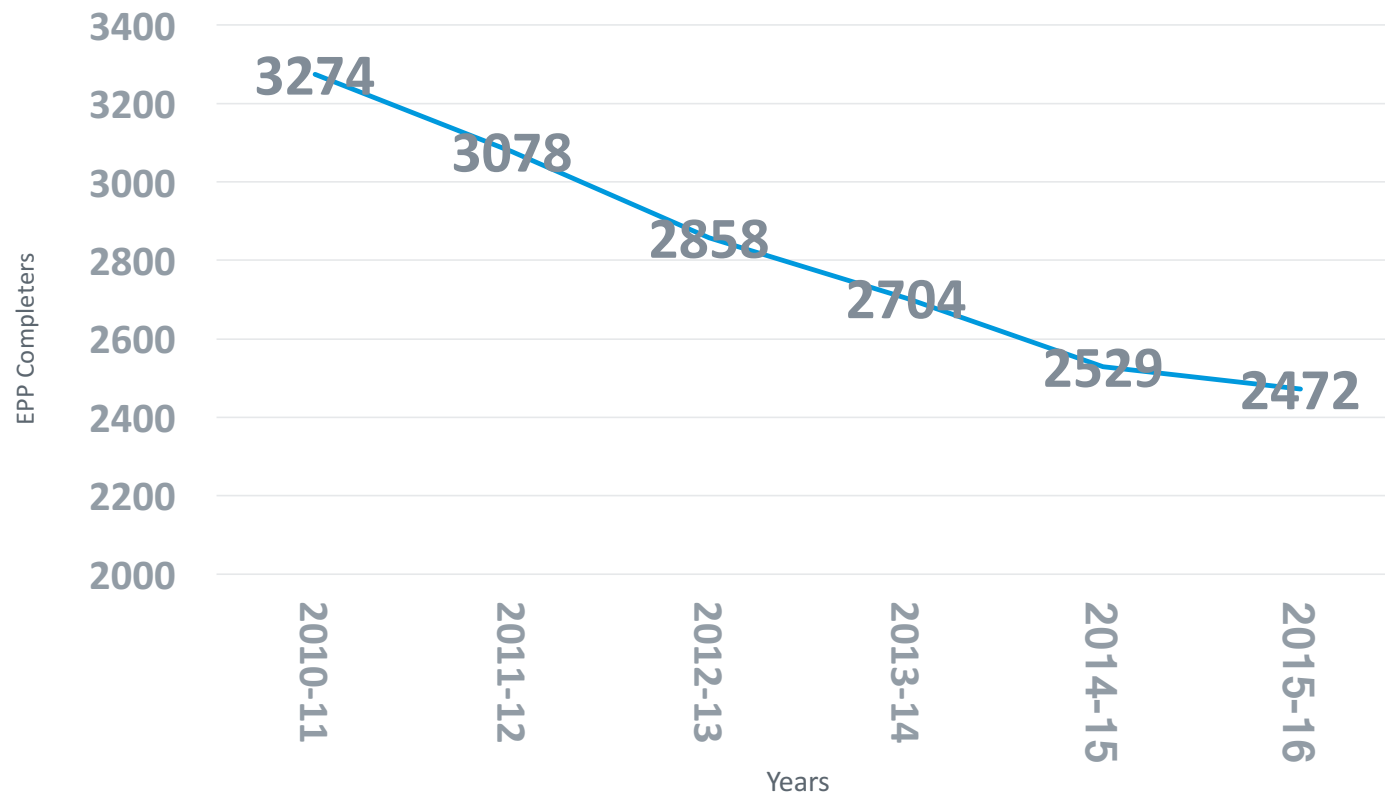
The Problem



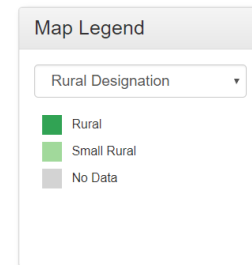
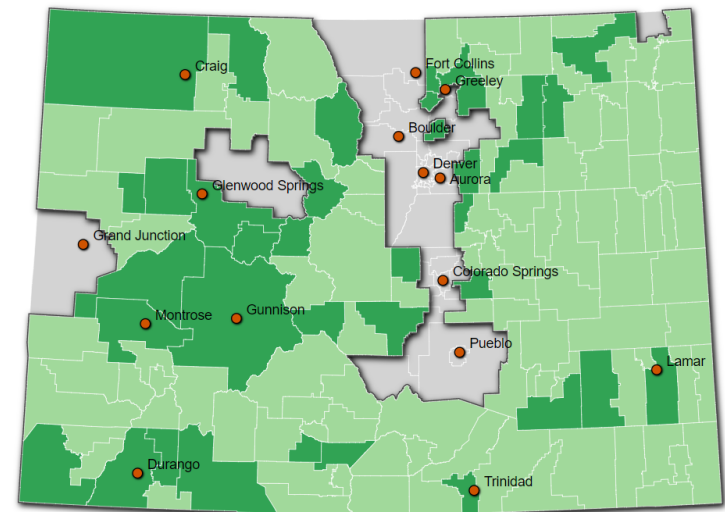
- **Rural districts continue** to have difficulty in **recruiting** and **retaining** teachers in historically hard-to-staff endorsement and licensure areas such as math, science, and special education.
- **Upwards of 5,000 annual openings** across districts
- Up to 100 or more around the state, end up going completely unfilled during the year and are filled by Emergency authorized educators or long-term substitutes.
- **Colorado loses approximately 15%** of new classroom teachers in the first 5 years. About a third of Colorado educators will be eligible for retirement over the next five years.
- Science and math educators, as well as special education teachers, teachers of color and specialists like audiologists, **are in high demand.**

Our Current Situation

Steady decrease in the number of educator preparation completers from Institutes of Higher Education



Rural and Small Rural Colorado



Cost of Living

- Cost of living, and 4-year turnover rate from 2012-15 reveals that over 95% of rural school districts' teacher salaries are below the cost of living (Bissonette, 2017).
- Districts with the highest 4-year turnover rates are all designated as small rural and tend to have smaller numbers of teachers. As a result, while turnover percentages are high they are relative to the number of teachers employed.
- It is estimated that the annual cost of teacher attrition for Colorado ranges from \$21 to \$61 million dollars (Alliance, 2014).

Rural Impact

- Top 5 Colorado school districts with the greatest disparity between average teacher salaries and cost of living are also small rural district
- Noteworthy that the combined average salary of \$26,761 for all five districts is
 - 48% below the state average salary of \$51,204
 - 17% below the \$32,126 average starting salary for Colorado teachers
 - 26% below the national average starting salary of \$36,141 (LPI, 2015).

Teacher Salaries

Colorado Teacher Salaries, Turnover, and Cost of Living (COL)

School District	2015-16 Average Salary	2015 Cost of Living	2012-15 Percentage Below (COL)	4-Year Average Turnover
District A	\$30,073	\$47,761	-37.14%	45.7%
District B	\$32,674	\$45,535	-28.24%	44.4%
District C	\$24,922	\$44,962	-44.57%	36.1%
District D	\$33,804	\$44,858	-24.64%	34.8%
District E	\$35,689	\$46,866	-23.85%	33.9%

Source: Bissonette, D. (2017). *Colorado Data on Teacher Salaries, Cost of Living and Turnover*. Unpublished raw data.

Salary Matters

Teachers with starting salaries of less than \$40,000 have a 10% higher 4-year attrition rate than those teachers with starting salaries of \$40,000 or more.

Source: The National Center for Education Statistics

Outreach Efforts

14 Town Halls Across
Colorado

400+
Town Hall Participants

6,000
Survey Comments

Action Plan

Legislative Considerations

- Consider an initiative to promote the value of the teaching profession and encourage all others to do so
- Provide financial support for teacher compensation, retention and progression in the field.
- Support proven strategies to increase the number of educators going into the profession.
- PERA Public Employees' Retirement Association Retirees Employed By Rural School Districts House Bill 17-1176.



Retain Educator Talent by Increasing Teacher Retention

Objective 1: Ensure teachers are supported by providing continual training and professional development necessary for impactful teaching through professional licensure.

Objective 2: Differentiate teaching as a career by offering advancement opportunities that encourage teachers to remain in the classroom

Objective 3: Improve teacher working conditions

Strategic Goal 1 & Objectives

Retain and Attract Educator Talent by Increasing Teacher Compensation and Benefits

Objective 1: Explore a state recommended minimum educator salary at or above school district's cost of living

Objective 2: Create compensation incentives to subsidize district cost of living

Strategic Goal 2 & Objectives

Attract Educator Talent in Content Shortage Areas by Developing Targeted Programs in Areas of Need

Objective 1: Establish hiring projections

Objective 2: Increase the number of dual licensure program offerings in teacher shortage areas

Objective 3: Prepare more teacher candidates in teacher shortage areas (PreK, math, science, technology, engineering, special education, and world languages as well as minority educators)

Objective 4: Encourage retired teachers in shortage areas to return

Strategic Goal 3 & Objectives

Attract Educator Talent by Creating Programs to Increase Enrollment and Completion of Educator Preparation Programs.

Objective 1: Increase positive perceptions and messaging around teaching as a career

Objective 2: Create financial assistance incentives for potential EPP majors

Objective 3: Offer alternative forms of financial support for student teachers and re-examine EPP student teaching policies that restrict employment.

Strategic Goal 4 & Objectives

Q & A

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